

21W.730:05, Writing on Contemporary Issues: Imagining the Future  
Fall 2007  
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## THE READER'S NOTEBOOK

Part of your work for the semester will be to *read* all the material assigned as carefully and attentively as you can and to *write* informally about the reading you do. I will expect about a page or so of written response to each reading assignment, more for the longer works, such as the novels. (You're welcome to write several shorter entries on the novels rather than one long one.) If you want to respond to two or three selections in one notebook entry because they are related in subject matter or style, your entry should be correspondingly longer. I expect your responses to be passages of prose and not just notes and jottings alone (though it is fine to do those jottings in addition to the prose entries, if you want). I expect them also to be informal, speculative, reflective of careful reading, and written in a spirit of questioning and exploration. You should feel free to use your notebook to raise questions, record observations, react as you feel moved to do, change your mind, reflect on or react to class discussions, note connections you see with other texts, both those assigned for the course and other things you've read, films or television or ads you've seen, things you've observed, and so on.

Each notebook entry must be headed with a full bibliographic citation of the piece you are responding to. (On handouts, I will provide the necessary publishing information.) Also, when you quote directly or refer to something in the text, you should cite the page of the source in parentheses (the MLA citation style).

The criterion for a successful notebook is this question: Does what I have written adequately represent my experience of reading and thinking about what I have read?

Your notebook entries should be typed. Keeping your responses on a disk as well is a good way to make sure a lost notebook doesn't present serious problems at the end of the semester, but always print out a hard copy and have it available for me to collect when I call for your notebook. And please keep your notebook writing separate from all the handouts, class notes, and other writing for the course.

I will collect notebooks for a quick review regularly but randomly; please **bring your notebook with you to each class meeting**.

My hope is that keeping the notebook will deepen and enrich both the reading and writing you'll do in the weeks ahead, and that it will help you in your efforts to further develop your abilities as a reader and writer, both in school and out.